

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD  
BOARD MEETING SESSION  
OFFICE OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS,  
DIVISION OF DRINKING WATER & DIVISION OF WATER QUALITY  
MAY 19, 2020**

**ITEM 9**

**SUBJECT**

UPDATE ON THE WATER BOARDS' EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE IMPACT OF FRESHWATER HARMFUL BLOOMS (HABS) ON WATER QUALITY.

**DISCUSSION**

The Office of Information Management and Analysis (OIMA), Division of Drinking Water (DDW), and Division of Water Quality (DWQ) will describe how they are addressing the impact of HABS on water quality and the requirements of Assembly Bill (AB) 834 (Freshwater and Estuarine Harmful Algal Bloom Program) signed in September 2019.

Freshwater HABS are primarily formed by cyanobacteria (formerly blue-green algae). These microscopic bacteria can produce cyanotoxins, which are harmful to humans and animals. HABS can change the physical conditions of the waterbody, which may also degrade water quality.

Staff from OIMA, DDW and DWQ will update the Board with their current efforts to protect the many beneficial uses at risk from HABS. Since 2016, the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) within OIMA has coordinated incident response to recreational public health risks from HABS. SWAMP staff work with DDW in waterbodies where both recreational and drinking water beneficial uses overlap. DDW further coordinates with drinking water purveyors across the state to monitor and mitigate the impact of toxins in drinking water. DWQ and Regional Water Board staff already using evaluation guidelines for identifying waters impaired due to HABS and are considering the options for developing standards for cyanotoxins.

AB 834 formalizes a HABS program within the Water Boards and creates specific objectives for the program to address: event response, statewide assessment and monitoring, risk assessment, research, outreach and education, and reporting. The Board will also be updated on OIMA's strategy to expand its current HABS efforts and collaborate with other entities within the Water Boards to build the program mandated by AB 834.

**POLICY ISSUE**

None. (Informational item)

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None. (Informational item)

**REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT**

None. (Informational item)

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

None. (Informational item)